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THE FAIRYTALE TURNS BACKWARD

I'm afraid of this lake we walk around
 where even mallards on the sunny log
 bring one more question, and the long dives
 of gulls call to you where you stand
 on the stone bridge. Some spiteful fairy's
 charming you toward darker water.
 Enchanted by minnows and turtles,
 by creatures of puddle and pond,
 you're being pulled into green algae.

No matter how many kisses I give you
 you go away from me, changing into cold,
 your thin blood shifting channels at night
 under layers of wool and flannel. The chemicals
 do what they can, but they are not magic. There is
 no more magic we know of anywhere.

We live very close to the deep well. Already
 you have forgotten what we were like together
 and you ask me why I am crying.

We have finished eating from a single plate,
 you will never sleep in my bed. I cannot
 take you with me to the palace.

JEANNE LOHMANN©
San Francisco, California

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